

Christians Must Avoid the Israelites' Mistakes

Introduction:

1. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Christians are given some very important instructions that are based on God's dealings with the Israelites.
2. Some general matters are presented in vs.1-6.
 - a. According to vs.1-4, God blessed the Israelites by delivering them from Egypt, by providing food and water for them, and by providing direction and protection for them.
 - b. However, we learn from vs.5 that God was not pleased with many of the Israelites, and they were not allowed to enter the Promised Land.
 - c. In vs.6, Christians are admonished to avoid the mistakes of the Israelites.
3. More specifically, we are shown:
 - a. in vs.7 that Christians must not be "*idolaters*"
 - b. in vs.8 that Christians must not "*commit fornication.*"
4. "*Fornication:*"
 - a. is a general term that includes all types of unlawful sexual activity [sex outside of marriage, adultery, homosexuality, incest, prostitution, etc.]
 - b. sometimes figuratively refers to idolatry (2 Chronicles 21:11-14; Exodus 34:12-17).
5. Since these instructions are based on events recorded in the Old Testament, let us first examine . . .

Discussion:

I. THE ISRAELITES AND FORNICATION

- A. In the beginning God revealed His will for sexual intimacy (Genesis 2:24).
- B. In the law He gave to the Israelites, God clearly taught them to avoid fornication.
 1. God condemned all forms of fornication, including adultery (Exodus 20:14), bestiality (Exodus 22:19), incest (Leviticus 18:6-18), and homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22).
 2. According to Leviticus 20:10-21, death was the penalty for these sins.
- C. One occasion when the Israelites committed fornication is recorded in Numbers 25:1-9.
 1. Balak, the king of Moab, tried to hire Balaam to curse the Israelites, but Balaam refused to do so (Numbers 22-24).
 2. However, Balaam counseled the Moabites to give their women to the Israelites, and this resulted in fornication and idolatry (Numbers 31:16; Revelation 2:14).
 3. Consequently, many Israelites died.
- D. On the basis of this information, let us turn our attention to . . .

II. CHRISTIANS AND FORNICATION

- A. God's original plan for sexual intimacy is included in the New Testament (Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:31).
- B. In the New Testament, God clearly teaches Christians to avoid fornication.
 1. The New Testament repeatedly condemns fornication (1 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5).
 2. The consequences of fornication are serious -- it will prevent a person from inheriting God's kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21).
- C. One occasion when a Christian committed fornication is recorded in 1 Corinthians 5.
 1. (vs.1) A man in the Corinthian church was guilty of fornication.
 2. (vs.2) The church had done nothing about this situation.
 3. (vs.3-5) This man was to be disciplined.
- D. Remedies:
 1. A fornicator can be washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Corinthians 6:11; Acts 18:8).
 2. A Christian who commits fornication can be forgiven (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).
 3. The key to avoiding fornication is having a pure heart (Mark 7:20-23).
 4. Parents must instruct their children about moral purity (Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:3-5).